



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of The
President &
Vice-Chancellor.

UEB/2018/2407/01

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 5 June 2018

Present: Professor G Valentine (GV) (Chair)
Professor J Derrick (JD), Mrs H J Dingle (HJD), Mr A Dodman (AD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Professor Wyn Morgan (WM), Professor D Petley (DP), Professor Dame P Shaw (PS), Mr Rob Sykes (RS), Professor Craig Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Professor L Maltby (LM) and Ms D McClean (DM) (item 4), Ms T Wray (TW), Mr S Thompson (ST) and Ms C Hamilton (CH) (item 5), Mr I Wright (IW) (item 6), Dr C Edgar (CE), Mrs L McCarthy (LM) and Mrs L Carlisle (LC) (items 7 & 8), Mr R Gower (RG) (item 9), Mrs V Jackson (VJ) (items 10 & 11)

Apologies: Professor Sir Keith Burnett (KB), Dr T Strike (TS)

Secretary: Mr M Borland (MB), Mr N Button (NB)

1. Minutes of UEB held on 15 May 2018

(UEB/2018/0506/01)

- 1.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

2. Minutes of UEB held on 22 May 2018

(UEB/2018/0506/02)

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 were approved as an accurate record subject to amendment to show that PS had given apologies for the meeting.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 UEB noted that there had been progress on a number of action items recorded from the meetings held on 15 May 2018 and 22 May 2018, including those related to: financial matters; GDPR; and Benchmark Statistics.

4. Scholarships for post-graduate research students

(UEB/2018/0506/03)

(Professor L Maltby & Mrs D McClean in attendance for this item)

- 4.1 UEB considered a paper which proposed principles to underpin the use of core and shared costs funding and of external funding which was allocated by the University for PGR scholarships. Also proposed were governance arrangements for PGR scholarships and the level of PGR support from shared costs in 2018/19.

Attention was drawn to the challenge of maintaining numbers of PGR students, increased pressure from scholarship funders, who expected PGR students to complete within the funded period, and potentially from the Office for Students (OfS) in the future. How the institution could leverage investment in scholarships was an important consideration.

4.2 During discussion UEB noted the following:

- The University's distribution of scholarship funding should be strategic and not algorithmic. The approach needed to meet the requirements of external funders while delivering the broad University strategy.
- PhD students were under increasing pressure to undertake more during their course, with the effect that there was a general view that it took 4 years to complete a PhD regardless of the length of the funding period. The review of Doctoral Training would provide greater clarity on some of those issues, including the expectation regarding the time to complete a PhD.
- A well-functioning system of PGR scholarships could act as a marketing tool. One potential explanation for a decline in numbers of PGR students was that many prospective students were only made offers after they have provided evidence of funding.

4.3 UEB agreed the following:

- It was recognised that performance was not as strong as the University would wish to see. Investment in PGR scholarships strategically to attract high quality students and to maintain a strong PGR community.
- The University's Investment should be used to leverage increased PGR funding.
- There should be a realistic expectation for PGR students to submit their thesis within the funded period.

4.4 UEB recommended the following:

- (a) The aim should be a 10% reduction in the overall spending on PGR scholarships.
- (b) There should be a more fundamental review of the nature of postgraduate study at TUoS, including expectations of PGR students, the benefits of a common approach across the institution.

5. Reputation update and next steps - presentation

(Ms T Wray, Mr S Thompson & Ms C Hamilton in attendance for this item)

5.1 UEB received a presentation on reputation and brand. An update was given on the campaign, brand, web and visual ID work and the findings of the brand tracker. Progress had been made on improving the visual identity and distinctiveness of the University branding, including for the proposed Clearing & Adjustment journey to be used in August 2018. Attention was drawn to the success of advocates in promoting the University in comparison to the University's closest competitors and the opportunity the brand tracker provided to facilitate greater understanding of the University's reputation and to unify staff and the wider community behind agreed messages.

5.2 UEB welcomed the presentation and the incorporation of previous feedback given by UEB, and discussed the following:

- The use of the city of Sheffield in the University's branding. Universities seen as distinctive by prospective students had utilised their location as part of their offer. It was noted that Marketing Sheffield was undertaking the 'Sheffield Makes' campaign focusing on trade, tourism and talent.
- The success of the Students' Union and how it could enhance the offer to prospective undergraduate students.
- The use of large numbers of Sheffield students, through the Student Panel, to inform the brand tracker, which ensured that views reflected the diversity of the student population and allowed information to be collected from smaller subgroups within the existing student demographic. Care needed to be taken as

the panel would reflect the view of students already at Sheffield and could not reflect the views of those who had chosen a different institution.

5.3 Actions:

UEB endorsed the ongoing work on reputation and brand and agreed:

- (a) A Steering Group, with UEB representative, would be established which would finalise the approach on reputation and brand.

6. Casual Teaching Engagements – a new approach

(UEB/2018/0506/04)

(I Wright in attendance for this item)

6.1 UEB received a paper that proposed an alternative approach to engaging casual staff to deliver regular and/or pre-planned teaching across the University. Attention was drawn to the implications of the use of casual teaching contracts on teaching quality, its effect on expenditure, and the national picture surrounding the nature of job security and universities' relationship with Trade Unions.

6.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- There was a tendency for casual contracts to be used to deal with gaps in teaching, which had over time developed into a significant item of expenditure for the University.
- Casual contracts could in some circumstances be appropriate, for example, in the case of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).
- The data on casual contracts did not provide sufficient detail of the type, nature and scale of the work undertaken.

6.3 Actions:

UEB agreed the following:

- (a) UEB recommended to the President & Vice Chancellor that from September 2018 all planned and scheduled teaching would be delivered by staff engaged on standard University employment contracts. Exemptions for cases where there were reasons which would preclude individuals entering into employment contracts with the University or where engagements would be so short as to render an employment contract impractical.
- (b) GTAs and other non-teaching causal assignments would not be included in the above recommendation.
- (c) The new approach would be communicated to Heads of Department, Faculty Directors of Operations (FDOs), Human Resources Managers, Finance Managers, and Trade Unions.
- (d) It would be established the means by which the current non-staffing spend on casual teaching is allocated to Departments in order to support the transition to standard contracts.
- (e) Human Resources would work with FDOs and Professional Services Leads to explore further the work undertaken on non-teaching based casual assignments to better understand the type, nature and scale of the work undertaken. This information would be reported to UEB by Faculty and Department and with recommendations of next steps.

7. Student Recruitment Update

(UEB/2018/0506/05)

(Mrs L Carlisle, Dr C Edgar & Mrs L McCarthy in attendance for this item)

- 7.1 UEB received and noted the Update Report. Attention was drawn to the plans for the new round of Open Days for 2019 entrants which would be held on weekends and bookings for the UG pre-application open day for Saturday 23 June had increased by 42% compared with 2017 when the equivalent event was held on a Thursday. Also highlighted was the launch of the Talk To Us pilot for postgraduate students, the short-term access to additional UCAS data, and the ongoing uncertainty about international student recruitment from Malaysia following the unexpected election result.
- 7.2 UEB discussed the challenging student recruitment environment. While the number of applications had increased quality had remained relatively stable. It was noted that steps to improve quality were not expected to have an immediate impact and increasing the number of applications was an important first step.
- 7.3 A further update would be presented to UEB in July.

8. Confirmation, Adjustment and Clearing 2018

(UEB/2018/0506/06)

(Mrs L Carlisle, Dr C Edgar & Mrs L McCarthy in attendance for this item)

- 8.1 UEB considered a paper which set out the latest undergraduate forecast position for September 2018 entry and provided a summary of the planned approach to support departments and faculties in implementing the recruitment strategy as agreed through the planning round deliberations. Attention was drawn to 1 June data which showed student recruitment was below target, but the position compared favourably with the same period last year. It was not anticipated that the target for student numbers would be met in Confirmation and the target would need to be met through Clearing.
- 8.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:
- Clearing had yielded higher quality applicants towards the end of the 2017 Clearing period than in previous years.
 - Although there were potential income implications in the short term in maintaining quality, it was seen as necessary in order to maintain the University's market position.
 - Planning had been undertaken to ensure systems were robust for dealing with high levels of demand during clearing.
 - The Faculty of Engineering had undertaken scenario planning for all cohorts to effectively prepare for potential outcomes in student recruitment.
- 8.3 UEB agreed that the University's general principles would remain in place, namely, the expectation was that most departments would recruit as many ABB+ applicants as they could, and with the freedom to accept at BBB should they wish. Alongside this, departments who advertised at BBB 'in-cycle' were permitted to accept at BBC. WP applicants and those with disrupted studies sat outside these general parameters.
- 8.4 UEB recommended the following:
- (a) Faculties would engage in scenario planning for all cohorts to effectively prepare for potential outcomes in student recruitment.

9. Proposed model for Faculty-based Research Support: Update

(UEB/2018/0506/07)

(Mr R Gower in attendance for this item)

- 9.1 UEB received the recommendations of the Report. Attention was drawn to the fact that the bilateral meetings with Faculties had now taken place and concerns raised by Faculty Vice Presidents had successfully been addressed. UEB approved:
- The principles underpinning a consistent, scale-able model of research support across the Faculties.

- An “in principle” level of support for each Faculty, revised as necessary following bilateral discussions with Faculties.
- The proposed approach to implementation.

10. Closed Minute and Paper

11. Closed Minute

12. Report of the Estates and Capital Sub-Group

(Meeting held on 16 May)

(UEB/2018/0506/10)

- 12.1 UEB received and approved the Report and recommended the following for approval by the President and Vice-Chancellor:
- (a) Norton Lower Pitches: additional funding to replace the non-compliant watering system and repairs to the culverts and fencing.
 - (b) Data Warehouse: to continue with the proposal to develop over three years.
 - (c) Identity and Access Management (IdAM): further release of £1.55M capital programme funding to enable the Project to deliver Phase 1.
 - (d) 1.5T MRI Scanner: the business case and release of the requested £1.15m funding, from the Faculty’s MRI Reserve Account, to allow the procurement of the scanner.
 - (e) APS Central Annex Plant growth facility LED lighting: the submission of an interest free revolving loan funding request to Salix Seels for £830k to deliver the project to completion.
 - (f) TERC/PACT2 Building fees: the release of £424k of fees to progress the design of the building to RIBA Stage 3. (Underwritten by the Faculty of Engineering)

Action:

Regarding the ECSG request in relation to Elmfield that the Faculty of Social Sciences provide a report on the Academic Strategy for the Management School to the Chair of ECSG, any potential implications for other departments.

13. Round Table

- (a) UEB members were reminded that the volunteering day with the incoming Students’ Union officers would be held on Thursday 26 July.